

11/4/65

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AIRTEL

TO: DIRECTOR, FBI (100-106670)  
FROM: SAC, MEMPHIS (100-4105) (P)

MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR.  
SM - C

On 11/4/65 ERNEST C. WITHERS, Confidential Source, Memphis, Tennessee, who has always furnished reliable information in the past and who is familiar with many phases of racial activities in West Tennessee, advised that on 11/3/65 Rev. JAMES EDWARD SMITH, a male Negro, last known to reside at 510 North Main Street, Covington, (Tipton County), Tennessee, in care of GEORGE IRVIN, had just advised WITHERS that Rev. MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR., head of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC), will come to Covington, Tenn., to speak at the conclusion of an all-day freedom seminar to be held in Covington on 11/13/65, claiming KING's speech will be at 7 p.m. on that date. SMITH claimed that the seminar will be held in the Canaan Baptist Church, a Negro church in Covington. SMITH claimed that KING wants to get a "foothold" in Tennessee which heretofore has been an NAACP stronghold. ~~C~~

Rev. SMITH also claimed that he was doing some research work for the Atlanta, Ga., Regional Office of the Office of Economic Opportunity (OEO) by checking on the Neighborhood Youth Corps, an adjunct of the OEO.

3 - Bureau (RM)  
2 - Atlanta (100-5586) (RM)  
Airtel... 5 - Memphis (1 - 100-4105)  
Teletype... ① - 157-166, SCLC  
A. M. (1 - 100-3572, CORE)  
FOIA(b)7 - (D)  
A. M. S. D. (1 - 170-70 Sub, E. C. WITHERS)  
Spec. Del. WILL:gan  
Reg. Mail. (10) Jme  
Registered.

All paragraphs are unclassified  
unless marked to the contrary.

CLASSIFIED & EXTENDED BY SP4 2/10/81  
REASON FOR EXTENSION:  
FCIM, II, 1-2.4.2  
DATE OF REVIEW FOR  
DECLASSIFICATION 11/4/85  
157-166-76

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When WITHERS asked SMITH when he last talked to KING, SMITH claimed that this was about two weeks ago when KING committed himself to come to Covington. WITHERS told SMITH that he understood KING was in Paris, France, about that time but SMITH still insisted that he had talked to KING either in person or by phone. ~~✗~~

WITHERS stated that he does not believe SMITH is telling the truth; that SMITH [REDACTED]

[REDACTED], basing this description on the fact that in recent months SMITH has made press releases indicating his intentions to have massive marches on the State Capital, Tennessee; to have mass voter registration campaigns on specific dates; to march on the Memphis, Tennessee, Police Department on 9/11/65; and on none of these occasions did SMITH carry out his announced plans. SMITH has further publicly claimed to have been a graduate of the Theological School, Wheaton College, Wheaton, Illinois, and to be the National Representative of the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE) in West Tennessee. ~~✗~~

Independent investigation has determined from the Registrar's Office, Wheaton College, that SMITH has never attended Wheaton College; and an inquiry by the New York Office at the National Office of CORE has determined that SMITH is not a representative of CORE.

In view of the repeated false statements made by Rev. JAMES EDWARD SMITH in recent months, this office at present is of the opinion that this information is false and for this reason, UACB, is not disseminating to military intelligence, Secret Service, and U. S. Attorney, Memphis, and to pertinent local authorities, Memphis, in the absence of information corroborating authenticity of SMITH's pronouncement.

Liaison Source [REDACTED] FOIA(b)7 - (D), SCLC, advised this date that he has no reason to believe KING is coming to West Tennessee.

Liaison Source [REDACTED] FOIA(b)7 - (D) "Tri-State Defender," Memphis, advised he has received no information to indicate KING is coming to this area.

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LEADS:

ATLANTA DIVISION

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Through its established sources and logical investigative methods, will endeavor to determine whether or not MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR., or any of his duly designated representatives plan to appear at Covington, Tennessee, on or about 11/13/65 and, if possible, determine whether or not the SCLC plans any organizational drives in Tennessee.

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